



VOL. XI.

AUGUST, 1870.

NO. 8.

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, BOSTON.



THE WINGED GEMS.

How would you like to go with me to the West Indies and Brazil to see the "winged gems,"—the humming-birds?

"I can see a humming-bird, sir, without going to Brazil, or any farther than our own garden. I caught one once in a trumpet-creeper blossom."

Yes, yes, you are right; but there are about four hundred species of humming-birds, and only one of these lives in the United States. It is called the "ruby-throated humming-bird," and is well named, I think. It is beautiful enough; but some of those found in South America are far more beautiful. And it may be well to remember that all the humming-birds in the world are found in America and the

near islands: there are none in Europe, Asia, or Africa. Some of these birds, as you see in the picture, are very small,—not much larger than a very large bumble-bee. Some are very curiously feathered, so that you hardly know them to be birds at all. And such funny little nests! Did you ever see one? I have. I saw as many as fifty the other day. "In Brazil?" Oh, no! I can't go to Brazil; and so I tried to do the next best thing. By the way, let me give you this advice: If you can't do what you want to, then do the best you can; and don't be sour about it, but be contented. I couldn't go to Brazil: so I went to the Boston Natural-History rooms, and there saw a great number of stuffed humming-birds, and their little soft nests, each with two white eggs that looked like little white beans.

Did you ever hear a humming-bird sing? I know you have not; for, of all the hundreds of kinds, not one has a song. The humming that you hear is made with their wings. Almost all brilliantly-colored birds are songless. There's a lesson you may learn from this, children. God divides his various gifts among his creatures. He does not give them all to one. You and I must be willing, then, to have others possess talents and blessings which we do not have. We mustn't be envious. The great thing is to improve all the powers he has given us, and use them to do good with and so honor our Father who is in heaven.

Uncle Ed.

For the Child at Home.

THE TWO GENTIAN.

Down in the dell by Clear Brook, there is a moist and mossy place, where every year a whole family of sweet, blue-eyed gentians are born into blossom. The few people who know the homes and haunts of the wild-flowers well have discovered the gentians' hiding-place; and you may be sure they go each year to seek them out.

The more numerous and adventurous tribe of bluets and arbutus have been gone long before the gentian opens its eyes to the sky. The little wind-flowers have hung their meek heads and are blown away, and the glossy-leaved bell-wort has forgotten its long-faded blossoms. Even that dear, sleepy little wake-robin has nodded its starry head for the last time when the blue gentians come, bringing all the glory of the summer sky in their breasts.

As soon as they are fairly blossomed, you see there is a difference in the flowers. Two kinds of gentians, twin-sisters by birth, grow together in this place.

Some are open, and silken-fringed on every petal; others are tightly closed at the top like buds. No azure cup or golden heart have they; but they seem always like little blind flowers, turning up sightless faces to the sun. Poor gentians! they never come to any thing more or better than fast-shut buds.

There is a beautiful story of the gentians, which, though it may not be quite true, yet gives a sad significance to the unopened blossoms, and teaches a lesson that we all need to learn.

Long ago, in fairy-time, two clumps of gentians grew together by a brook-side.

One morning, when the sun first lighted on the flowers, two wide-open blossoms stood side by side; and each held in its turquoise chalice a great cool drop of dew. It was a treasure to the flowers; for, when the bright noon sun shone on them, they would have this crystal secret hidden away in their hearts to comfort, and keep them from drooping.

Now, just as one was saying to the other how delightful it was to have so much nectar all their own, a fairy came past that way. He was tired and thirsty; for he had traveled far, and the morning was hot: so he was very, very glad, as you may think, to light upon such a treasure as two big drops

of dew, all caught, and ready for his drinking. So, very gently, and as politely as he could, he asked the nearest gentian for a draught from her cup. The

very plain: will you remember it? And, dear grown-up children, do we not need it too?

F. W. H.

For the Child at Home.

"GOD LOVES ME."

When you were born, your mother loved you with her whole heart; didn't she? And, when your little brother came, she loved him, too, with her whole heart. But she didn't love you any the less. She did not have to divide her heart to give part of its affection to you, and a part to your baby-brother. She kept on loving you just as she always had, and still had all the love she wanted for him. And so she would keep on if she had twelve children. She would love each one with her whole heart. Now, if the mother's love had to be divided among her children, you might feel sorry for every new brother or sister that came; for you would know that each one would rob you of a portion of that love which binds you and your mother so beautifully together. You are glad, I know, that it is not so.

Now, God's love is just the same: it can not be divided. He loves all of his children as if each were the only one. I do not say that he is not better pleased with some than others. But his love—that deep, holy love which he has for all his creature, which leads him to care for every one tenderly, to supply their wants, and to desire their happiness—is the same to all.

Now, why do I tell you of this? This is the reason: It often happens that little children, and indeed older people, feel, "God has so many to love and care for, so many that are better and lovelier than I, that he can't care very much for me. I am only a poor little weak, sinful, ugly child: nobody here in this world seems to care much for me; and I don't see how God can, with all the beautiful angels and great and good people to love." Dear child, remember now what I tell you: God's love is like the sunlight: it falls on every one. When the sun shines, you can't help feeling it: it is free to the whole world, and comes with the same glad rays to the rich and poor, the good and bad. So God's love shines upon all alike. God loves you, and he loves me, just as if there was not another person in the universe. This is such a precious, comforting thought, that I want you to think about it. I want you to enjoy it, and take all the sweetness of it. God loves you just as if you were the only child in the world. He has done every thing for you that he could have done if you alone had needed his care. You must never again feel that you are forgotten, that nobody cares for you. You must never again think that God has dropped you out of his account, or flung you aside, as not worth caring for. He knows your name, where you live, and all about you. He feels sorry for you when you are sad or suffering, and glad when you are happy. He wants you to be good and to love him, and has prepared a delightful home for you when you die. It is wonderful, but true.

We have got fairly started on the way to heaven when we have learned this one sweet lesson about love. We all believe, in a general sort of way, that God loves the world; that he loves everybody: but when we can say from the heart, God loves me,—me in particular,—then we can't help loving him back again; can we? Love wakens love always. When a person truly loves us, and tells us so, and does every thing possible to prove it, it wakes up the same feeling in our hearts in return. It is just as the warm spring sun draws the flowers up out of the ground. They can't help coming up to meet his warm rays, and blossom in his brightness.

And then, when our hearts begin to give back love to God,—why, how easy it is to please him, to obey his commands, to do as he wishes! We are glad and grateful; and we joyfully serve him, and

delight to keep near him, to read and hear and think about him, to pray to him, and rejoice in the thought of one day living with him.

I was going to tell you some other things about love; but this one lesson is enough for to-day. I hope you will remember it. Keep saying to yourself, "God loves me." Write it down on a little slip of paper, and add your name to it. Put it into your Bible, where you can see it every day; and try if this sweet thought will not bring you up nearer to the dear heavenly Father than you ever were before.

Aunt Emma.

GOOD-NIGHT.

Of all the low, sweet words
That linger in the heart,
And quickest stir the answering chords,
In memory's notes apart;
That lead the soul back through the years
To childhood's lisping prayer,—
There's none that wakes a sweeter chord,
Or longer lingers there,
Than that dear word, "Good-Night."



"THE BEST THING I HAVE."

I want to tell you a very short story about little Annie,—a story that I read in a book called "Little Happy Heart." She wanted to make her minister a present: so she caught a fine hen, her best Bolton Gray, and put her in a basket, and went to the parsonage, and knocked at the door of Mr. Allen's study.

"While Annie stood waiting for Mr. Allen, the poor Bolton Gray, not liking her prison, was making a great noise, and many efforts to get out. She had succeeded in pushing one foot between the basket and the cover. The claw, and the red ribbon, and the loud cackling within, surprised Mr. Allen very much.

"What have you there, my child?" he asked.
"It's my very best Bolton Gray," said Annie with a pleasant smile. "I've brought it to you for a present."

"To me? Didn't you want it yourself, child?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I did want it: but I love Jesus so much this morning, that I would give him the best thing I have that's all my own."

"And why, then, do you bring it to me?" asked Mr. Allen.

"I can't send any thing straight to Jesus; so I must give it to somebody he loves: and you know that will be just as if I gave it to himself. I think he loves you better than any one I know: so I brought it to you."

I need not tell you that Mr. Allen took the gift; for how could he refuse it when it was brought for such a reason as that?



flower gathered up her green robes, that she might not soil them by contact with the dusty fay; and tightening her petals, the better to guard her treasure, answered coldly that she had no water to spare,—only enough for herself.

"Here, Sir Fay," said a sweet voice, "I will give you my dew. It is as clear and cool as my sister's; and you are quite welcome to it."

"More fool you!" growled the other, shutting up as fast as she could. "You'll want it badly enough before sundown."

"I shall do very well," replied her sister. "I am closer to the brook than you; and this poor fairy has come a long way, and is tired."

"All is, you'll have none of mine," rejoined the other. "I think charity begins at home."

Nevertheless, the generous gentian offered her cup of dew, and the fairy drained it, though half reluctantly; and, hoping she would not suffer for want of the nectar, he went his way.

The benevolent blossom almost forgot her charity; but there was one watching her who did not forget. In the very hottest hour of the noon-time, she was shrinking under the shadow of a bunch of ferns, when the angel of the flowers appeared beside the brook.

"Little gentians," said he, "I was not far off this morning when the fay passed by; and I saw your conduct. For you that was self-forgetful and generous, there is this reward." As he spoke, he bent over tenderly, and touched the timid flower; and, lo! her dark-blue petals were edged with a fringe more fine and silken than any other flower could boast.

"For you"—and the angel turned sadly to the sister-blossom—"there remains this punishment: you have shut yourself up with avarice: you can never open again, but must always be a helpless, imperfect bud." The poor blossom bowed her head in shame and silence. She had never a word to say. She had kept her drop of dew: it was fast shut now in her heart; but she needed it no more. Never again did she unfold herself to the glad sunshine; and all the little "closed gentians" are her children.

As for the other blossom, the dear, bright, "fringed gentian," she has borne her honors meekly; and her golden-hearted children will open their cups for the dewdrops next autumn as brightly and as sweetly as she did on that morning long ago.

Dear children, the lesson of the two gentians is

For the Child at Home.
"WHO SHALL ABIDE IN THY TABERNACLE?"

PSALM XV, 1, 2.

Beside the pearly gates
 A white-robed angel waits;
 And throngs of little travelers pass by,
 All upward looking with an eager eye.

The shining gates unfold
 Upon the streets of gold:
 Each little face peers anxiously within.
 Ah, who shall enter there? No child of sin!

Upon the crystal sea,
 Upon the immortal tree,
 With hope and wonder and delight they gaze;
 When, lo! the Voice supreme majestic says,—

"Welcome, thou blest and true,
 Whose spirit through and through
 Translucent is as heaven's own glorious air,
 And foul deceit has cast no blemish there!"

All pale, abashed they turn:
 One timid child alone,
 With modest step, advances to the light,
 And stands unshrinking in the burning sight.

It scans her through and through:
 It finds her pure and true;
 No stain of falsehood on the snow-white soul.
 And straight the waiting angel on his scroll

Writes down the maiden's name;
 And now, 'mid glad acclaim
 From harp and voice of sweet celestial tone,
 He bears within the gates the guileless one.
 H. E. B.

For the Child at Home.
THE NEW SEAT-MATE.

"George Hill?"

"Whispered."

"Willy Bell?"

"Whispered."

So answered two bright-eyed boys as the teacher called the roll one September afternoon. Two, bright-eyed, boys," I said: but you would not have known it; for their gaze was fastened upon the floor, as the teacher looked sadly upon them.

"You may remain after school," said the teacher, Miss Merrill.

When the other scholars had gone, she called George and Willy to her side. Taking a hand of each, she said kindly, "Boys, I am disappointed. I hoped better things of you; for I thought you were trying to be Jesus Christ's little boys. He wants all his children to do right. He wants them to show other boys and girls how good it is to have such a friend,—a friend who helps them in their studies and plays,—helps them to do right in every thing."

"I am so sorry!" said Willy, not trying to hide the tears that came to his eyes.

"I'm ashamed of myself," said George. "I know the boys will say our religion is all 'make believe' if we can't do such a little thing as keep from whispering on purpose."

"Do you blame them, George?" said Miss Merrill.

"No, I'm sure I don't. I know how I used to watch Frank Wilder to see if loving Christ made him any better in school."

"Did you ask Jesus to help you this morning?" the teacher asked.

"Yes'em," said Willy, hesitating.

"And he wouldn't?" she continued.

"Oh, no, teacher! It was not his fault. I didn't ask hard enough. I guess he thought I wasn't in real earnest."

"Well, boys, what shall be done? I dislike to separate you; for I want you to be the best boys in school, and lead the rest to Jesus. I think, however, you ought to have a new seat-mate."

"Who?" said both the boys at once.

"One who can sit between you, and keep you from whispering."

"But, teacher," exclaimed George, "there isn't room in our seat for more than two!"

"The one I mean will ask but little room. If you will give him that, he will cure you of this besetting sin."

"What boy can it be? I can't think," said Willy.

"Nor I," echoed George.

"I mean, boys," said the teacher solemnly, "that I want you to ask your Saviour to come and sit with you,—to sit *between you* when you are tempted to talk or play. Have you room in your seat for him? You say there is room: then ask him to fill it. He will hear you; he will sit with you. Good-night."...

When the school-roll was next called, George and Willy could both truthfully answer, "Perfect." Friday came, and they had not broken one rule for the week.

"How do you like your new seat-mate?" said Miss Merrill as George and Willy lingered to speak with her.

"He is the best, the very best, we ever had," said both eagerly. "We mean to keep him with us for ever."

Do not some other little boys and girls want such a seat-mate?
 S. R. M.



For the Child at Home.
FIVE BEARS.

BY MRS. HERBERT.

Two little boys, five and seven years old, once accompanied their parents on a journey to the White Mountains. They had promised, on leaving home, never to object to being left behind at the hotels when their parents wished to go sight-seeing to places not suitable for them; and, on such occasions, Lewis, the older boy, felt an especial charge both of himself and of his younger brother. Five years after, Lewis wrote for his school composition an account of this journey, in which he said,—

"I remember, that, early one bright summer morning, my father and mother started off on horseback from the Crawford House to ascend Mount Washington, leaving my little brother Charlie and myself at the hotel for the day. My mother had told me just how to manage, and what to do; and I felt very big that I had the key of our chamber in my pocket, and was to see that Charlie had his luncheon and nap at the usual time. I took so much pleasure in thinking over how I was to manage, that I felt no regret in seeing my parents ride away and leave us. I have forgotten a good deal about that day: but I recollect well that we were very happy, and that one great pleasure was watching five great snarling bears who were chained on the grounds; re-

membering never to go any nearer to them than a certain seat, where our father had told us we could stand or sit to look at them."

Lewis wrote a good deal more in his composition, which you might like to hear; but the one thing to which I now wish to call your attention is, that Lewis and Charlie could be trusted to amuse themselves alone with watching five snarling bears, because they were sure not to step over the bound which their father's command alone had set for their little feet.

I hope, my child, you can be trusted just so; and that you and Lewis and Charlie will always be equally obedient to your Father in heaven.

For the Child at Home.

THE LITTLE KNIFE THAT GREW SO BIG.

Jessie was seven years old, and lived a mile from school.

It was a bright June morning, when Jessie's mamma put the blue dinner-pail in her hand, and, kissing her, said, "Now you may go. But be sure and stop for Miss Carrie."

Jessie ran lightly away, never minding how many of the bright drops of dew were scattered from their grassy hights by her careless tread.

Every thing was very beautiful; and, being of a joyous nature, she thought she could not help running and singing,—like the birds all about her.

After going a quarter of a mile, she stopped for her friend Miss Carrie. Jessie had been secretly intrusted to this young lady's care.

"Come in!" said Miss Carrie. "Why, you're a perfect rosebud! only your feet look as if the bud had been dropped in the dirt," she added, smiling, as the little muddy feet followed her in.

Jessie laughed, though she didn't exactly know what at; for her feet were one of the least of her concerns. She and Miss Carrie were great friends, although Carrie was just twice Jessie's age.

After telling Jessie to play with Cherry, a pet canary, her friend ran out of the room to put up some dinner for herself.

"Oh, dear! I hope I haven't got to wait long," sighed the restless little girl as she found herself alone with the canary. Then

she put her pail down on a writing-table, and was turning toward Cherry, when a little pearl-handled penknife caught her eye, and she stopped to look at it.

"It is so cunning!" thought Jessie, "and not much longer than my finger." How the little girl wished that she had one like it no one knows; only those who have been tempted, like her, in early life. There she stood, alone,—the tempted child, with the coveted knife before her.

Alone; yet not alone: for there were two that were watching,—our Father in heaven, who is everywhere, and sees every thing; and Satan himself, not a whit less crafty than when he stood before our mother Eve.

What would Jessie's mamma have said had she seen her little girl with her hand *almost on the knife*? Perhaps some thought like this came into the child's mind; for she drew back with the thought, "Oh! I can't take it; for it isn't mine."

"But you can put it in your pocket, and no one will ever know," quickly suggested the Evil One, as if afraid of losing this little child for his victim.

The door opened, and Carrie came in with her dinner; and the knife was still on the table. But Jessie's face told of the conflict. Noticing this, Carrie said, "You are tired of waiting, little flyaway; and I've only got to get my hat, and we go!" So saying, she left the room again.

